United Nations A/CONF.192/PC/16

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 July 2000

Original: English

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Working paper submitted by Switzerland on preliminary views on the final document

The 2001 Conference as a catalyst for coordinated and comprehensive action

The process leading to the 2001 Conference and beyond takes place in the context of a wide range of national, subregional, regional and international initiatives relating to the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (hereafter referred to as "small arms"). The broad aims of the 2001 Conference should be to help supplement, coordinate and reinforce such initiatives, not to replace or compete with them. In particular, the Conference should:

- Ensure that national, subregional and regional measures to tackle small arms proliferation and misuse are supported and reinforced by the wider international community;
- Facilitate the establishment of appropriate national, subregional and regional actions on small arms where they do not presently exist, and promote the further development of existing initiatives;
- Prevent and remove avoidable inconsistencies or incoherence between various national, subregional and regional measures, which could undermine overall effectiveness;
- Enhance international information exchange and cooperation to: increase the effectiveness of efforts to tackle the problems; encourage timely identification of emerging problems; and promote learning and implementation of good practice;
- Mobilize international resources to help communities, countries and regions that need assistance to carry out their programmes.

Preliminary views on the final document

The final document of the 2001 Conference should be motivated by a desire to (i) raise awareness of the problems in hand, (ii) mobilize both the political will

00-54449 (E) 260700

throughout the international community to act and the necessary resources and (iii) draw a road map for future coordinated and comprehensive action.

Accordingly, the final document may be expected to cover at least the following five elements:

- Description of the problems relating to illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects;
  - This element should, in particular, shed light on the scope of the "illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects";
- Acknowledgement of the urgent concerns of affected countries;
- Political declaration of global commitment to cooperate in curbing illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects;
- Plan of action, including a set of measures on specific issue areas ("clusters", see below);
  - The plan of action should provide an adequate framework for establishing and developing a comprehensive set of international agreements and programmes in the future;
  - It should coordinate, reinforce and supplement initiatives at the national, subregional, regional and international levels;
  - It should include follow-up and monitoring mechanisms to promote its implementation, preferably according to an implementation time-line;
  - A separate treatment of political, legal and practical measures may provide a way to accommodate the proposals in various stages of agreement;
- Modalities for review and follow-up.

Possible clusters to be addressed in the plan of action

The following clusters were identified at the second ministerial meeting of the Human Security Network. The meeting took place at Lucerne, Switzerland, on 11 and 12 May 2000. Foreign ministers and representatives of 13 countries from all regions of the world, as well as experts from various non-governmental organizations, participated.

- Promoting a secure environment in conflict-prone or war-torn regions, through, in particular, strengthening and reforming of security sector institutions and promoting implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes;
- Preventing excessive destabilizing accumulations and transfers of small arms and combating illicit arms trafficking, through, in particular, strengthening of marking, record-keeping and tracing;
- Ensuring appropriate control of the legal manufacture and transfer of small arms, including the activities of brokers, the risks of diversion and the importance of reducing small arms flows to conflict regions;

- Strengthening international cooperation and information exchange between Governments, licensing or judicial authorities and enforcement agencies, as well as improving transparency;
- Enhancing stockpile management and security and promoting destruction or responsible disposal of "surplus" weapons in official stocks;
- Promoting and assisting collection, responsible disposal and destruction of excessive or illicit weapons.